UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/474
24 October 1995
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 71 (b)

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: REGIONAL CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 49/76 C of 15 December 1994, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested me to submit to it at its fiftieth session a report on the work of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The present report, focusing on the sixth and seventh ministerial meetings of the Committee, is in fulfilment of that request.

2. Both meetings were held at Brazzaville, the first from 20 to 24 March and the second from 28 August to 1 September 1995. Mr. Wilfrid de Souza, Director of the Africa II Division of the Department of Political Affairs, and Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, my Special Representative in Angola, represented me and at the sixth and seventh meetings, respectively and delivered a message on my behalf. A message from the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity was delivered at each of the meetings by his representative. Both meetings were chaired by His Excellency General Joachim Yhombi Opango, Prime Minister and head of Government of the Congo.

3. At the sixth meeting the following officers were elected to conduct the work of the Committee for a period of one year: Congo, President; Angola, First Vice-President; Zaire, Second Vice-President; Equatorial Guinea, Rapporteur.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH MEETINGS

4. During the sixth and the seventh ministerial meetings, the Committee focused its work on the following main areas: (a) review of the Central African geopolitical and security situation; (b) consideration of the study on the

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typology of the sources of crises and conflicts in Central Africa; (c) consideration of the draft protocol on mutual assistance on defence and security matters and of the draft statute of a model unit for peace-keeping operations in Central Africa; (d) consideration of the establishment of a non-permanent general staff for crisis management in Central Africa; and (e) consideration of a draft budget for the Committee.

A. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

5. It has become an established practice for the Committee to review the geopolitical and security situation in the subregion at each of its meetings with a view to seeking practical ways and means of addressing existing or potentially conflictual problems in each of the countries concerned.

6. After an exchange of views on the subject, the Committee noted that the security situation in Central Africa had improved somewhat since last year. It observed, however, that Burundi and Rwanda continued to be sources of much concern. The delegation of Rwanda expressed reservations with regard to that assessment of the situation in the country.

7. The Committee welcomed the adoption on 28 August 1995 of Security Council resolution 1012 (1995), on the creation of an international commission of inquiry to establish the facts relating to the assassination of the President of Burundi on 21 October 1993, the massacres and other related serious acts of violence which followed. Furthermore, the Committee noted with satisfaction the initiative taken by the Organization of African Unity to promote the restoration of peace and security in the subregion, particularly in Burundi, by means of diplomatic measures and a military mission.

8. The Committee welcomed the steps taken by the authorities in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad to halt the activities of highway bandits. It also welcomed the significant progress made in Angola in implementing the Lusaka Protocols. It welcomed the return to a state of constitutionality in Sao Tome and Principe, following the attempted coup d'état that had taken place in that country.

9. The Committee began an exchange of views on the topic of foreign intervention for humanitarian purposes in the subregion on the basis of a paper submitted by the delegation of Congo. It decided to defer further consideration of the item to the eighth meeting.

10. The question of the proliferation of light weapons in the subregion has been under constant consideration in the Committee. The spread of such weapons, including among the civilian population and other armed groups in the countries of the subregion, has contributed to the existence and exacerbation of conflicts in the area and undermined the efforts of Governments to ensure security, law and order and sustainable development. In the context of the sixth ministerial meeting, a presentation was made on this subject by Mr. William Eteki-Mboumoua, former Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, in his capacity as head of my Advisory Mission on the Proliferation of Light Weapons in the

Sahara-Sahel subregion. The Committee has decided, in this connection, to convene at a future date a meeting of the Ministers of Defence and the Interior of member States to examine the issues involved in greater depth.

11. Discussions have been held on the subject of a subregional arms register and on the need for promoting transparency. The need for effective control of the illicit flow of arms has also been expressed in this context. Many believed that the establishment of an arms register within the Committee that would take into account data such as force levels and light weapons would be a valid contribution to the existing United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In the view of many delegations, the Register in its present form is too restrictive in the categories of weapons with which it is concerned.

12. At its seventh meeting, the Committee adopted the Brazzaville Declaration on Cooperation for Peace and Security in Central Africa. In the Declaration, member States express their deep concern at the persistence of tensions and violence in the subregion and outline a number of measures aimed at improving the situation. These measures include the holding of one of the Committee's forthcoming meetings at United Nations Headquarters in order to allow for a broader exchange of views with United Nations organs and bodies involved in the search for solutions to the problems of the subregion. The text of the Declaration is attached as Annex I to the present report.

B. Review of the draft study on the typology of sources of crises and conflict

13. The typology, based on a study carried out by Cameroon and Chad at the request of the Committee, was adopted at the sixth meeting. The study, which is attached as annex II to the present report, draws on the recent experiences of the countries of Central Africa with regard to sources of tensions, crises and conflicts at the domestic, inter-State and international levels.

C. Draft protocol on mutual assistance on defence and security matters and the statute of a model unit specializing in peace-keeping missions

14. At the seventh meeting the delegations of Congo and Zaire submitted the study they had been requested to carry out at the fourth meeting in 1994. The Committee took note of the draft text submitted by the two countries and deferred consideration on it to the eighth meeting in order to allow member States the opportunity to study it in depth.

15. With regard to the statute of a model unit specializing in peace-keeping operations, to be established within the armed forces of member States, the Committee adopted the terms of reference proposed by Congo and Zaire at the sixth meeting. It strongly encouraged other member States to proceed with the establishment of such units, following the examples of Equatorial Guinea, Chad and Zaire. Such units, it was pointed out, could be made available for peace-keeping operations when needed, especially in the subregion. The

Secretary-General was requested to provide United Nations assistance in training personnel for the units.

D. Consideration of the establishment of a non-permanent general staff for crisis management

16. At its seventh meeting the Committee completed its consideration of the item, taking into account in particular the study carried out on the topic by the delegation of Gabon. It adopted the proposal and assigned the task of gathering information and data on crises to the national committees set up in each member State to follow up the work of the Committee. The Bureau of the Committee was charged with the responsibility of coordinating the work of the national committees in this field.

E. Consideration of the budget of the Bureau

17. The Committee commended the efforts made by the delegation of Congo to prepare a draft budget for the Bureau of the Committee, following a recommendation made at the sixth meeting. The consideration and adoption of the budget estimate was postponed to the eighth meeting. In the meantime, a trust fund in the amount of 11 million CFA francs, or 1 million from each State, was opened so that the President of the Bureau could, as called for by the Committee, undertake the missions of solidarity in the countries in conflict in the subregion. It was decided that the fund should be endowed by 31 March 1996 and should be open to voluntary contributions from member States and any other interested donors within or outside the region.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

18. Deep-seated problems continue to afflict Central Africa, threatening its stability and its future. The two meetings of the Committee in 1995 again offered a valuable opportunity for States members of the Committee to take decisions which, if combined with the requisite political will and practical measures, should strengthen the chances of peace and reduce those of war in the subregion.

19. It is vital, therefore, for the Governments concerned to translate into concrete actions their stated commitments to peace and cooperation and the various recommendations and decisions they have adopted to that end. The Brazzaville Declaration on Cooperation for Peace and Security in Central Africa, adopted at the Committee's seventh meeting, represents another important step forward in the Committee's quest for a better and brighter future for Central Africa. But its real value and significance will be determined by the extent to which the measures it contains are implemented.

20. The high cost of conflicts in the subregion, both financially and in human terms, underlines the need for bolder steps to prevent future turmoil. This will require patience, moderation and tolerance on the part of all, both at the domestic and at the inter-State levels. The role of the United Nations has been

to provide a mechanism through which the countries of the area can seek to harmonize their strategies for peace and mutual confidence. The primary responsibility for using that mechanism to good effect rests with the countries themselves.

21. I welcome the responsibility and seriousness shown by the Central African countries in their attempt to deal with the increasingly complex and multidimensional nature of the challenges facing the subregion including, in particular, the refugee and other humanitarian aspects. Many of these countries, in particular Zaire, have welcomed on their territories large numbers of refugees uprooted by conflict in neighbouring States. The growing problem of refugees and displaced persons in the subregion is not only a human tragedy but also a potential danger to security and sustainable development. It must be addressed in its totality. I encourage Member States to support the efforts of my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa, Ambassador José Luis Jesús, who is carrying out consultations on preparations for the convening of a conference on security, stability and development in the area.

22. I remain convinced that the Committee is an instrument that can contribute substantially to the restoration of peace and security in this part of Africa. I remain concerned, however, about the risk that continued non-implementation of decisions and measures agreed upon by the Committee will impair its effectiveness.

ANNEX I

Brazzaville Declaration on Cooperation for Peace and Security in Central Africa

1. The seventh ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held from 31 August to 1 September 1995 at Brazzaville, and examined the problems of peace and security in the subregion of Central Africa.

2. The Ministers expressed their deep concern at the persistence of tensions and violence in the subregion of Central Africa. They noted that this dangerous situation has led to tremendous losses in human lives, considerable material damage and unspeakable suffering among the population, including the massive movement of refugees. They stressed the fact that the resulting insecurity undermines the development efforts of the Governments and peoples of the subregion despite their considerable natural resources.

3. The Ministers agreed that the proliferation of arms even among the civilian populations, including armed gangs, was the main factor in the violence and insecurity prevailing in the countries of the subregion. They also agreed that socio-political problems, economic difficulties and the problems of refugees and displaced persons were exacerbating tensions within and among States.

4. The Ministers recognized that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the subregion devolved on the Governments and peoples of the countries concerned. They encouraged the efforts being made in this direction by the countries concerned. While welcoming the contribution of other States of the subregion to the process of national reconciliation and re-establishment of peace in these countries, they underlined the importance of the support of the international community as a whole.

5. They once again condemned the acts of genocide and atrocious massacres committed in Rwanda from April to mid-July 1994, the acts of extreme violence in Burundi and all other violation of international humanitarian law and reaffirmed their Governments' commitment and determination to spare no effort to prevent other manifestations of violence.

6. The Ministers reaffirmed their renewed support to the United Nations and expressed their profound gratitude for its tireless efforts at peace-building, peace-keeping and peacemaking and for its emergency humanitarian assistance to the subregion, in Africa and throughout the world. They conveyed their congratulations to the States members of the Committee that participated in United Nations peace-keeping operations, in particular, Cameroon, Congo, Chad and Zaire. They especially welcomed and expressed their support for the deployment of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) and the initiation of operations to consolidate the historic peace agreements between the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which were mediated by the United Nations. They also expressed their support for the current United Nations peace efforts in Burundi and Rwanda.

7. The Ministers also agreed that lasting solutions to the manifold challenges facing Angola, Burundi and Rwanda and the Central African subregion in general could be found only in the framework of close cooperation among the international community, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional institutions both directly and indirectly concerned. They particularly welcomed the recent visit of United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Angola, Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire, which helped further to open up prospects for a lasting solution to the conflicts in the subregion.

8. The Ministers launched an appeal for urgent, effective actions aimed at finding lasting, concrete solutions to the disturbing problem of refugees and displaced persons in the subregion. They expressed their deep appreciation for the humanitarian assistance provided to the refugees and displaced persons by the United Nations and non-governmental organizations and host countries. They also noted the heavy burden on the host countries, especially in the socio-economic, ecological and security areas. Referring to General Assembly resolution 49/24 of 2 December 1994, they reiterated their support for Zaire's request for special assistance from the international community, to deal with the problems caused by the flow of refugees into its territory. The Ministers considered that the problem of refugees, with Africa being in first place as the region with the largest number of refugees, is a humanitarian challenge and called on the United Nations, the countries of origin and the host countries to work together to ensure that refugees are not used for political purposes or to destabilize the States of the subregion, and to seek ways and means to repatriate them to their countries of origin. To that end the Ministers gave a mandate to the officers of the Committee to carry out missions of solidarity to the countries concerned as soon as possible in order to contribute to the process of re-establishing and strengthening peace in the subregion.

9. The Ministers stressed the fact that the prime objective of the countries of the subregion is to improve the standard of living of their peoples. They recognized that this will be possible only in a climate of peace and stability both within and among States. To this end, they underlined that a close relationship exists between security and sustainable development. In view of the considerable support from the United Nations and the international community for the efforts to promote security and development in the subregion, and the urgent need for the subregion to meet the challenges facing them in these two fields, the Ministers decided to hold one of their forthcoming meetings at United Nations Headquarters in order to allow for a broader exchange of views with the organs of the United Nations system.

10. The Ministers entrusted the officers of the Committee with the mission of organizing a subregional conference on the topic "Democratic institutions and peace in Central Africa".

11. Lastly, the Ministers noted that their meeting was taking place at a time when the United Nations was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary and reaffirmed their countries' commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter.

Brazzaville, 1 September 1995

ANNEX II

TYPOLOGY OF SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN SUBREGION

Bearing in mind the recent experience of the countries of the Central African subregion, a number of sources of tension, crisis and conflict have been identified, especially at the internal and inter-State levels and outside the subregion.

I. Sources of internal conflict

At the internal level, the main sources of conflict are as follows:

(a) Exacerbation of ethnic, cultural, religious and political differences;

(b) Arms proliferation among population groups, leading to banditry and terrorism;

(c) Early experience with democracy and democratic management, and failure to respect minority rights;

(d) Irresolute desires for secession;

(e) Coups d'état;

(f) Armed opposition movements;

(g) Widening civil wars;

(h) Major disasters;

(i) Poverty;

(j) Social injustice.

II. Sources of inter-State conflict

At the inter-State level, the main sources of conflict are as follows:

(a) Border disputes, especially those relating to the delimitation of borders and to neighbourly relations;

(b) Problems concerning refugees, displaced persons and illegal immigration;

(c) Desire for power.

III. Sources of conflict from outside the subregion

Sources of conflict from outside the subregion include the following:

(a) Aggression of all kinds by third States;

(b) Interference of all kinds by third States;

(c) Deployment of forces;

(d) Desire for power.